Montana Outdoors

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PHOTO ISSUE

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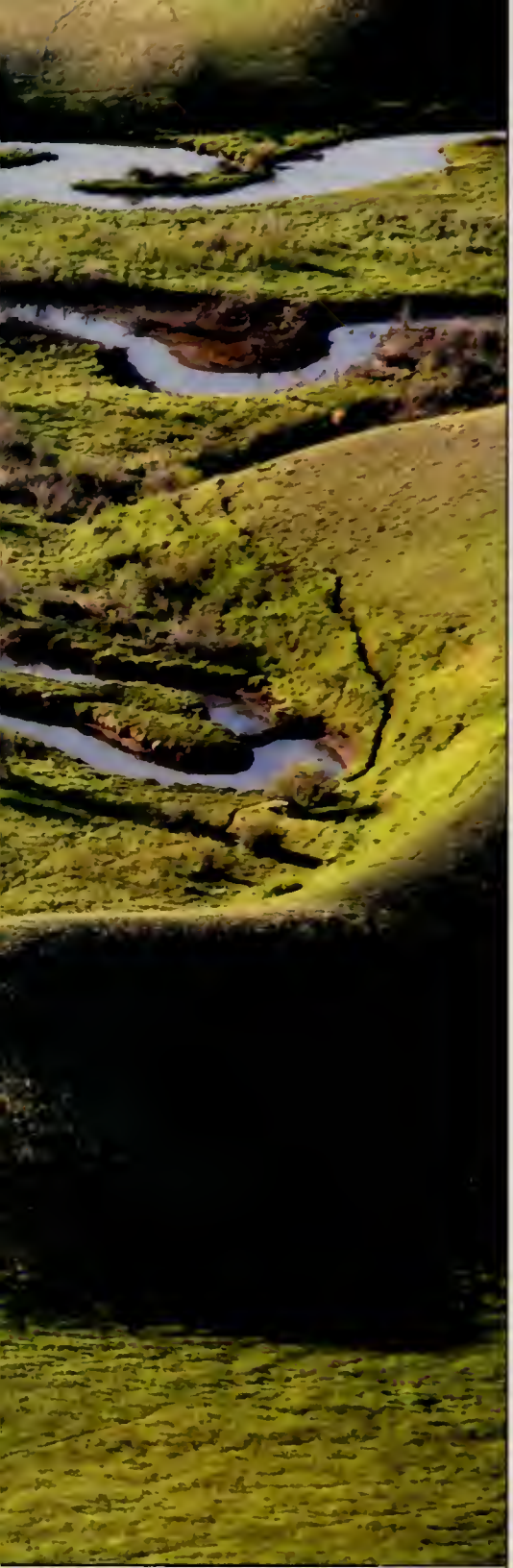


TODD KAPLAN

W. STEVE SHERMAN

TOM ULRICH

Over the years, many readers have asked how we select the images that appear in the annual photo issue. In this, our 28th edition featuring the state's best nature, wildlife, and landscape photographs, I've asked *Montana Outdoors* art director Luke Duran to explain the difficult but rewarding process he goes through each fall.

—Editor

It starts in September, when we e-mail the 240 or so photographers on our contributor list with a request to send us no more than 15 of their best images. The criteria: images that evoke an emotional response from the viewer; communicate Montana's beauty, drama, and spirit; or possess masterful qualities of light, tone, clarity, color, and composition. We also ask for images that demonstrate a photographer's artistry, hard work, and even luck, and the shots must have been taken in Montana. This year we received digital images from roughly 110 photographers, about 1,500 images total.

Next, I pare down the submissions by one-third, to a more manageable number. I show those to other members of the *Montana Outdoors* staff for their comments and opinion. Now the process becomes truly difficult, as I begin selecting images to compose two-page spreads. I want each spread to have a theme that connects the images on the page, so I look for photos with common traits or unifying features that work together. For example, the spread on pages 8 and 9 of this issue is a study in orange and white as well as one of serenity. The images are arranged in a way that leads the viewer from the ducks to the eyes of the coyote down to the leaf and then back up to the ducks. The arrangement further unifies three images already related by their common colors and mood. Another example is on pages 36 and 37, where the mood begins with the thrill of a bike plunging down a steep forested path, then becomes even more hair raising as a grizzly bear rushes in from the side, then finally calms down at the delicate waterfall tumbling into a mountain pool. The photographs have a common quality of movement and rays of light, but each evokes a different feeling.

After selecting and arranging the photos—this year we picked 68, or 4 percent of the submissions—I inevitably find that I've been unable to use many great images. Sometimes a spectacular photo simply doesn't fit with any other, or it's too similar to a photo we're already using. Often those images show up in future issues of the magazine.

My goal is for the completed photo issue to be more than just a collection of pretty pictures. I want viewers to take a journey through the diversity of Montana's landscapes, wildlife, and moods, to see familiar places and species as well as wondrous new ones they never knew existed here. I'm always thrilled to have this opportunity to showcase what we have in Montana, what we belong to. And to show off the remarkable talent and artistry of the photographers who spend so much time afield searching for images that convey something new and exciting about this state. It's an honor each year to share all that with you.

—Luke Duran

MACNEIL LYONS
Facing page: Lightning over a mountain meadow [illegible]

DARRIN SCHREDER
[illegible] Early fall [illegible] near Cascade

ANDY LONG
[illegible] Sandhill cranes [illegible] near Wolf Creek in [illegible]

GEORGE ROBBINS

Above, left: Western meadowlark singing
from a fencepost, Missouri valley

TONY BYNUM

Bighorn Ram, Sawtooth Mountains,
Custer National Forest

CHUCK HANEY

Ram Hunting, Bighorn Sheep Wilderness,
Montana (Bighorn sheep)

TIM ZIMBELMAN
Right: Lewis's blue flax

GARY KRAMER
Above: Northern flicker

STEVEN AKRE
Summer Lichen

PAT MUNDAY
Late Bittersweet in Autumn

TOM PATRICK

JASON SAVAGE

DANIEL W. HALL

JUDY WANTULOK
Right: Yellowstone cutthroat trout passing an salmonfly. Yellowstone River

DENVER BRYAN
Above, page: Mother watching for a rainbow trout. Paradise Valley spring creek

MICHAEL L. HARING
Brown trout and shad, a river stream. Golden Nugget Pier

ANGIE KIMMEL

BOB MARTINKA

MARK LAGERSTROM

CINDY GOEDDEL
Facing page: Newborn mule and cow.

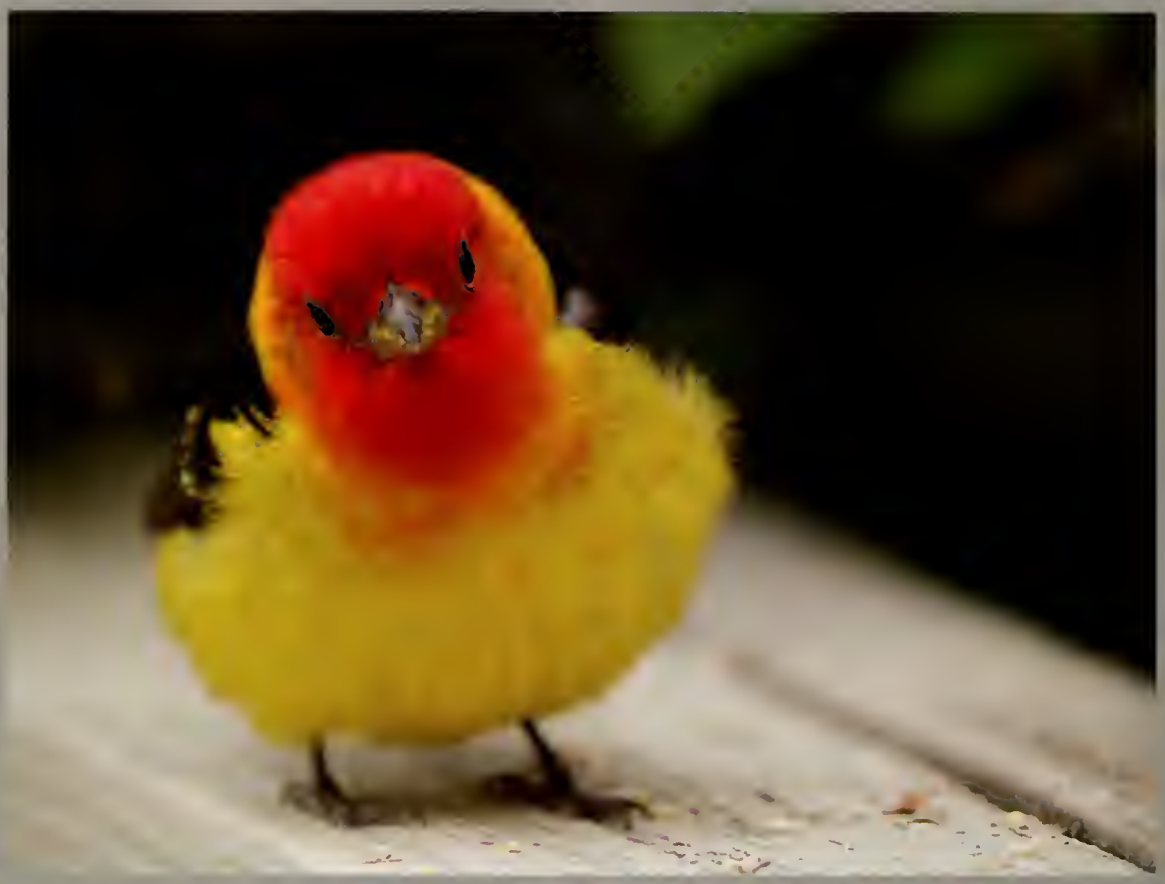
TIM CHRISTIE
[illegible]

CHUCK HARDING
[illegible]

JAMIE YOUNG

NELSON KENTER

JASON SAVAGE



BECCA WOOD

BEV KIRSCH

RICK SKEREMETA

ROBERT WESELMANN
Rain-soaked mule deer twins
and doe in sagebrush.

DONALD M. JONES

GEORGE ROBBINS

Short-eared owl with vole

DEA VOGEL

Northern hawk owl

LINDA ARNDT

Short-eared owl in snowy grass

ERIK PETERSEN

JUAN DE SANTA ANNA

RICK SHEREMETA

TONY BYNUM

JAIME AND LISA JOHNSON

CINDY GOEDDEL

DUSAN SMETANA

RICK DAVIS
Sunset over Big Fish,
river of Missouri

DELLA AND BRENT LONNER
Christmas project

SHANNON HOLLMAN
Tree silhouettes, Lower Valley
south of Ballsport

JIM STREETER
Bowed tall grasses

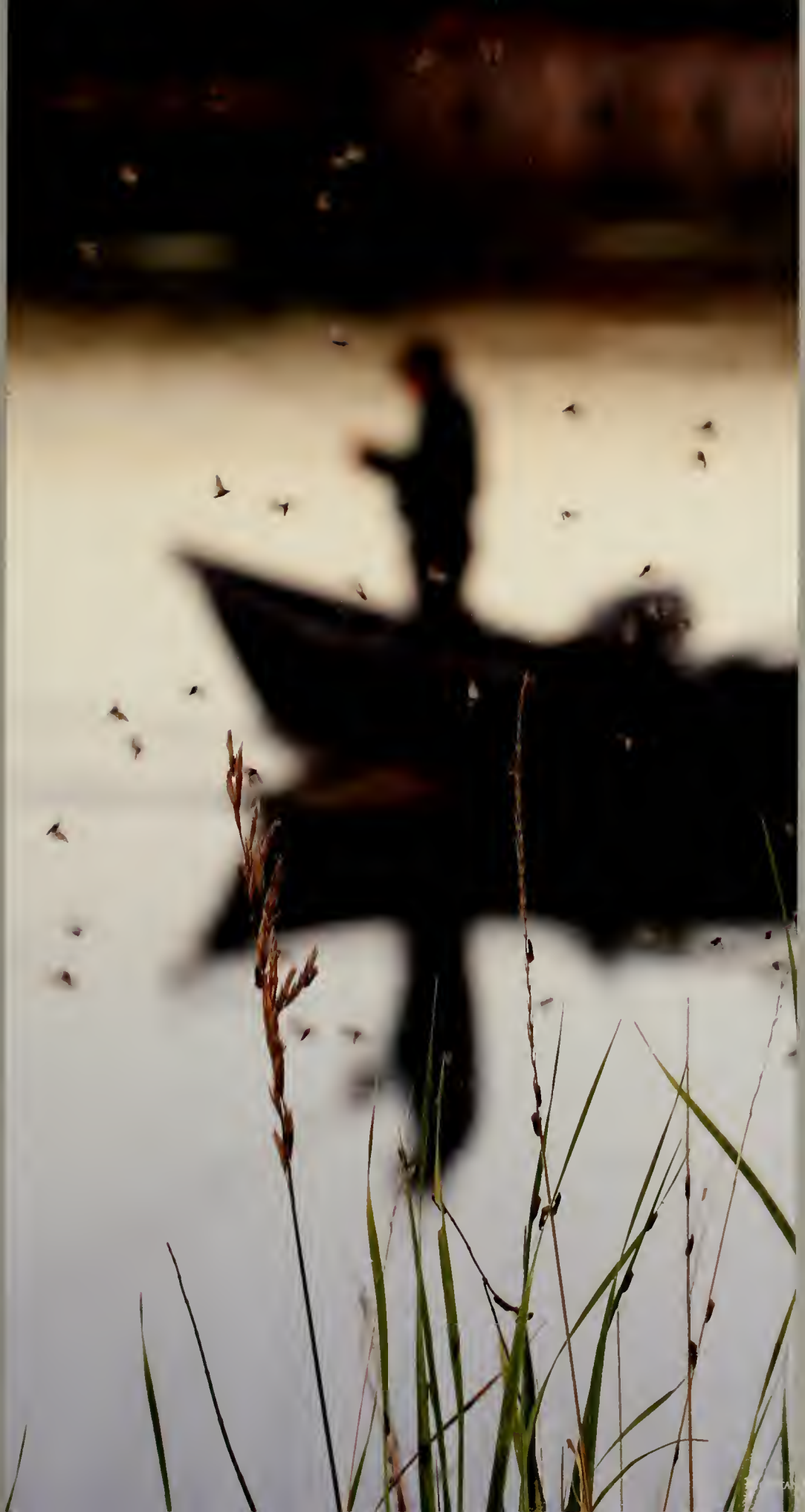
TOM ULRICH
Sunset over lagoon at
South Summit Creek
Glacier National Park

REBECCA STUMPF

LAWRENCE STOLTE

DENVER BRYAN

KENTON ROWE



JOHN REDDY

Foggy winter
sunrise with frosty grass,
Meadow River, near Covington

LARRY DEARS

Ice Dots

RON BOGGS

Rosehips and Ice Crystals

MICHAEL MCCANN

Lake Fork Bull Creek
in winter

CHUCK HANEY
High-speed mountain biking down a single-track trail near West Glacier.

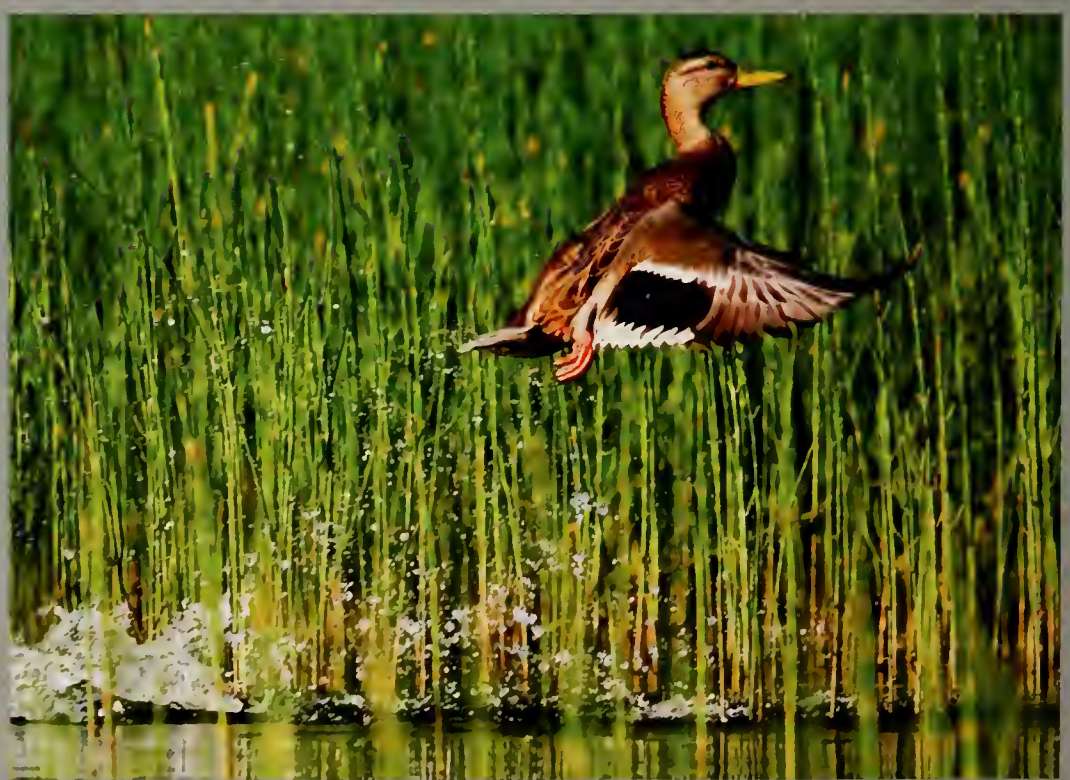
JEREMIE HOLLMAN
Grizzly in Flathead Glacier-Waterton Park

MITCH KUBIC
Upper Falls, near Big Sky

VIC SCHENDEL

JUDY WANTULOK

CHUCK HANEY



BILL BUCKLEY
Northern pintail
drakes displaying for a hen

NEAL & MJ MISHLER
Red-breasted merganser
rising to take wing

BARBARA MICHELMAN

BERT GILDART

DONALD M. JONES

PARTING SHOT

ERIK PETERSEN
Pickup on U.S. Highway 89 at sunset, near the Absaroka Range.

ASSOCIATION FOR CONSERVATION INFORMATION
Best Magazine:
2005, 2006, 2008;
Runner-up: 2007

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